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ABSTRACT

A study assessed the impact of the Shepherd School program, a nonformal basic education program in rural northern Ghana implemented by a nongovernmental organization. Data were gathered through observation; document analysis; and interviews with 42 children, parents, community members, chiefs, school staff, NGO members, and assemblymen in 2 communities. Findings indicate that the program is fostering children's engagement in school, as indicated by the fact that over 700 children who would not have entered school have been receiving basic education. This is significant given the history of animosity towards schooling in northern Ghana. As a result of consulting with community members during implementation, the program has been locally relevant and flexible enough to allow children time to perform their household duties and also attend school. Parents' attitudes towards education, especially girls' education, have improved. The communities have participated in constructing and maintaining school buildings, monitoring facilitator punctuality, recruiting facilitators, and setting the school schedule. The program has improved access to education and has served as an entry point to the formal schools, with about 147 students having made the transition to the state school system. However, skepticism from the Ghana Education Service and the more structured environment in the state school system have been constraints. Children interviewed indicated that they would use their education to advance on the social ladder rather than return to their home communities, as originally anticipated by program personnel. (TD)

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"IMPACT OF NON-FORMAL PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS: A CASE STUDY OF NORTHERN GHANA"

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Introduction

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There are established and irrefutable evidences that show the symbiotic and dialectical relationship between education and social change. As an instrument of liberation, education can enhance the attainment of higher level of self-consciousness and awareness (Indabawa, 1998)[1]. It can empower especially the disadvantaged groups. It is also capable of being an instrument for economic growth, productivity, social equity and social justice, eradication of preventable diseases, social apathy, and social immobility (Indabawa, 1998). In spite of the perceived benefits of education, the evidence is clear that many children from the developing world have been marginalized of educational access. Education in northern Ghana is a typical example of marginalization in the developing world.

Ghana, like many other developing nations, is still struggling to make basic education available to all citizens. This problem, traced back to the colonial times, has not received much improvement in the post-independence era. Series of reforms have been implemented to correct the pyramidal structure of the system but in spite of these efforts, the percentage of children who have not received basic education is disturbing. This issue becomes even more alarming when it is examined from geographical context. There are disparities in educational services between rural and urban communities. There is even wider disparity in the provision of educational services the southern sector is compared to the northern sector.

The provision of educational services in northern Ghana presents the reality of the dysfunctional nature of Ghana's educational system. With few schools, and mostly located in towns, lack of qualified teachers in classrooms, deplorable school infrastructures, high teacher attrition rate, it can be argued that the region is underserved by the educational system. From the colonial era, educational participation in northern Ghana has been characterized as from apathy to open resistance. People living in most communities in northern Ghana have resisted formal schooling. As a result of minimum participation the post independent governments have provided free scholarship scheme for all northerners up to the tertiary level. The reasons underlying this apathetic behavior are diverse (Atakpa, 1996; Blakemore, 1975; Farrell, 1999, Hall, 1986 cited by Farrell, 1999). Blakemore (1975) points out that during the 1960s attempts to make school attendance compulsory with police action in some villages in northern Ghana created some animosity towards state schooling[2]. Atakpa (1996) argues that the reason for the resistance of formal schooling in many communities is deeply rooted in the communities' religious and cultural beliefs[3]. Many of these communities are belong to the Islamic faith. As such they give preference to Koranic education over western-type education. Atakpa (1996) points that some of these people see the formal school system as a "satanic tool" that teaches western culture, and drives children to engage in vices such as illicit sexual practices. It also induces them to question the widely held cultural norms and practices. Similarly, most of the communities in northern Ghana are pastoral sub-populations, and farmers. Their lives revolve around their animals and farms. Children who are born into these sub-populations are also introduced to this lifestyle. Economically, socially, and culturally the traditional schooling is perceived as militating against their structural and actual needs. Recently, Action Aid, a non-governmental organization working in northern Ghana implemented the Shepherd School Program, non-formal basic education program, in Bawku West district in Upper East as part of the efforts to provide educational access.

"Shepherd School" Program: An overview

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[1]Indabawa, S. A. (1999). "The case of non-formal education provisions in Namibia". A paper presented at the Pre-Biennial Symposium and Exhibition, Johannesburg, South Africa, 1-4 December, 1999. Available: www.adeanet.org/wgnfe/publications

[2]Blakemore, K. P. (1975). Resistance to formal education in Ghana: Its implications for the status of school leavers. *Comparative Education Review, 5(3)*, 237-250.

[3]Atakpa, S. K. (1996). "Factors affecting female participation in education in relation to the northern scholarship scheme". Accra: Ministry of Education.

The Shepherd School program was implemented in 1996 through collaborative efforts of Action Aid and the beneficiary communities (ActionAid, 2000, p.8)[4]. The principle of the Shepherd School program is not only locally appropriate, cost effective, and accessible to disadvantaged children but also flexible enough to synchronize needs and the socio-cultural responsibilities of children and also educational responsibilities of parents. Through flexibility, the Shepherd School concept recognizes and addresses the conflict between the social responsibility of the child and the educational responsibility of the parent.

Model

- The school enrolls children who are between the ages of 6 to 15 years.
- The timetable is designed to allow children time to perform their socio-cultural responsibilities (farm work, domestic chores, baby sitting and shepherding) and also attend school.
- Community volunteers are recruited to serve as facilitators with lower remuneration.
- Communities manage their own Shepherd School with minimal external input (ActionAid, 2000).
- The schools act as entry point to formal school system.
- There is three hours of instructional time for teaching and is usually between 7 am and 10 am.
- School cycle is decided by the communities themselves and is normally fixed in order not to conflict the farming season.
- School uniforms are not compulsory.
- There is the use of multi-grade class from p1-p3 in some of the schools, and separate classes for p4-p6.

Project objectives

There are three main objectives of the Shepherd School Project:

1. To provide basic functional education to at least 30 percent of children living in target communities who do not have or have not had access to formal schooling or to those who have dropped out of school.

2. To provide the unique opportunity for children to effectively bride-up to the formal school system

3. To provide children who will return to the community after Shepherd School with basic literacy and numeracy skills.

The program has developed and taken its own form during the last years. Initially the schools were never set up as NFE centers, the program was rather informal, with schools having their own way of registering, teaching, structuring their classes and assessing pupils. The schools were supposed to provide proper p1-p3 education for those with no access to formal education. After some time the school has become 'structurized' (record keeping, dividing of classes). Since last year Ghana Education Service has posted a trained teacher to each of the schools to direct the administration of the school. Meanwhile the schools have also extended the classes to primary six.

Description of the communities

[4] Action Aid (2000). The Shepherd School program. Concept paper, p. 8

For the purpose of this study the two communities are represented by pseudonym. These communities are in Bawku West District, of the Upper East Region of Ghana. The population of these communities is very difficult to estimate. The areas are sparsely populated as is the characteristics of settlements in most communities in the northern Ghana. Each family has a round compound house that is built on family farmland. The houses are thatched houses with shrubs roofing to cool the housed from excessive heat during the prolonged hammattan season. The few average rich people (by the communities' standards) have houses that have been roofed with Zinc. Each household has kraal attached to the house. While there are no available statistics on literacy in these communities, it is estimated that as at 1994 about 68% of all children were not attending school. This cannot compare with the adult populace. The ethnic composition is homogenous. The people are mostly Kusaasi. Few people living in this area also speak the Akan language as a result of migration to the southern part of the country.

In terms of social amenities, electricity and telephone services are only located at the district capital and surrounding areas. People living in the remote communities do not own television, and in most cases, even radio receiver. These communities' sources of water supply are wells and bore holes that have been dug by some non-governmental organizations, as well as flowing streams during the rainy season. The nearest police station is located in Zebilla. The roads from the Zebilla town to most of the communities are not well constructed and it is very likely that during the rainy seasons these roads become muddy and therefore render the communities very inaccessible.

The socioeconomic status of the people living in these communities is below the poverty line. Their per capita income is less than US$20. The communities' main economic life is cattle rearing and subsistent agriculture. Every household has farm as well as animals mostly goats and cattle. The main agricultural products that farmers grow include millet, rice and onions for household consumption and also for sale. Millet is grown in two stages. The first type of crop known as the early millet is grown in May and harvested in July during the intense lean or hunger period. The late millet is also grown in July and this type of crop is harvested around October and November and stored for the year round. Between January and May, a number of males, females and children migrate to the southern sector of Ghana in search of menial jobs.

The district is one of the most deprived ones in terms of Infrastructural facilities. However the available infrastructures are mostly sited in the district capital.

The land is seriously depleted as a result of overgrazing by livestock and human activities. The rainfall pattern in this area is very unpredictable and isolated and this climatic situation mostly results in hunger and drought during the "hammattan season".

Because people in these communities are predominantly pastoral, almost every household rears cattle and goats. Cattle herding is a socio-cultural aspect of the lifestyle in the community. It is both a cultural and the communities' economic way of living. Cows are offered for bridal price whenever marriage is contracted. Socially, these communities are polygamous. Men are allowed to marry as many wives as they can afford provided they have cattle to present to the bride's father. Culturally and traditionally, men who have many wives are recognized as being rich and carry some amount of prestige. Men normally marry women and engage them in the fields and farms where these women become the breadwinners in the family. Wives and children are regarded as property of the husband. During planting seasons, wives and children are normally seen working in the farms in very warm weather conditions. Migration is very notorious in these communities. Between the months of January and May, most men and children would migrate to the southern section of Ghana to work as laborers in cocoa farms. Teenage girls migrate to the south to engage in petty trading and sometimes work as house helps.

Politically, these communities are under the Bawku West District Assembly. The communities have assembly members who serve as the community representative at the district assembly. These assembly members also serve as the liaison between the communities and the district office. Traditionally all the communities are ruled by chiefs who own the entire land and lease to community members. There are other council of elders and sub-chiefs who assist the chiefs in governing the community. The influence of the chiefs and their elders cannot be underestimated as they initiate or authorize the initiation of most or all the development projects in this area.

The community is comprised of Christians, Moslems and traditional religionists. Most of the Christians belong to the Catholic, Anglican, Assembly of God and Presbyterian faith. Church buildings are lacking in these communities, and church members usually walk to Zebilla, the district capital to attend worship. There are some Moslems in the communities but they are just a handful when compared to the Christians. There are more traditional religionists in these communities as well

Literature Review

The review of the related literature for the study centered on concepts on non-formal education (NFE), emergence of non-formal basic education programs (NFBE), organization/management of NFBE in developing nations, and education in pastoral communities.

Objectives of this study

> The aim of this study was to assess the impact of the Shepherd School program as perceived by children, facilitators/teachers, administrators, community members and key sponsors of the project. The study assesses the benefits and the problems encountered by stakeholders in implementing the shepherd school programs. The purpose is to analyze and interpret the attitudes of the community to the non-formal primary education programs, potential problems to be encountered in mainstreaming students in the formal school system and the future expansion of the program to other parts of northern Ghana.

This study argues that non-formal primary education programs can have important impact on the educational development of a community. For this to be possible, the context of the education must answer to the actual and structural needs of the population.

Significance of the Study

> Studies on non-formal basic education in Anglophone West Africa are very scanty, and that of sedentary pastoralists are almost non-existing. Therefore this study aims to build knowledge, and make further contributions to the existing knowledge on the conceptualization and practice of non-formal basic education.
>
> It is also aimed to develop a framework for analysis of non-formal basic education programs in marginalized communities.
>
> The practical utility of this study is immense. The study is more of explorative and seeks to evaluate the program. Furthermore, this study seeks to provide a framework for future replication of the program, and mainstreaming learners in the formal school.

Methodology

The study was build around the following questions:
What is the impact of non-formal primary education-"the Shepherd School program"-on pastoral communities in northern Ghana?

Sub-questions

- What is the participants' understanding of the Shepherd School program?
- What is the model of the Shepherd School Program?
- What are the differences between the Shepherd School Program and the "traditional" schools?
- What is the level and type of community involvement?
- What pedagogical strategies are the teachers/facilitators using in this program?
- What are the children actually learning in this program?
- What do the children hope to do with that learning?
- Is this program gender sensitive?
- What potential problems face learners enrolled in the program when they merge into the mainstream formal school in later grades?
- What is the potential for future expansion of this program?

The research design for the study followed the case study methodological framework with the use of multiple methods. The utility of employing these approaches in educational studies is well documented (see Anderson & Arsenault, 1998[5]; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000[6]; Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996[7]; Merriam, 1988[8]; Yin, 1984[9]). The sources of data collection for the study include observation, interviews and documents analysis. Data were gathered through formal and informal interviews with key informants, observations of school premises, classrooms, homes and school-committee meetings, and relevant school documents. School documents (school record of attendance, report cards, textbooks), minutes of PTA and SMC meetings, posters and drawings on the wall and facilitators' weekly forecast were all examined to obtain information about children's enrolment and attendance patterns, continuous assessment, pedagogical strategies, level of community participation and school management.

Sample

Forty-two participants making up of children, parents, community members, chiefs, key PTA and School Management Committee members Action Aid workers, local NGO members, education officers, and assemblyman were drawn from two communities to participate in the study between May 2001and February of 2002.

ANALYSIS OF IMPACT

Indabawa (1999) has pointed out that determining the impact of any educational program provisions is largely a subjective matter. Opinions will differ of what will count for relevance and impact. Measuring these is even more problematic. However, there are consensus on the fact that all programs, including those in the non-formal education must be relevant and meet the objectives for which it was implemented and the needs of the beneficiaries. In this regard, a claim can be made

[5] Anderson, G. & Arsenault, N. (1998). *Fundamentals of educational research*. London: The Falmer Press.
[6] Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research (2nd ed.)* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.
[7] Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J. P. (1996). Educational research: An introduction. New York: Longman Publishers USA.
[8] Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
[9] Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case study research design and methods*. London: Sage Publication.

that the fact these communities are participating in this educational program means it is very relevant to them. Indabawa (1999) also pointed out that the extent to which programs achieve their set objectives, may be an additional impact indicator. In this regard, so far this program has succeeded in providing educational access to children in these communities. The level of improvement of the quality of life of program participants and clientele, does tell how much impact the program has made. Measuring this is problematic for now due to the time span of the program.

Through analysis of the data, four impact levels were identified. These include school level impact, Family/home level impact, community level impact, and sponsor/policy level impact. Each of these impact levels has been discussed in details.

School level impact

School Engagement: The school started keeping enrolment and attendance records from 1999. This is due to the fact that initially the program was rather informal and no records were kept. There are inaccuracies of school records for the period between 1999 and 2001. While school enrolment statistics made available by sponsors to the researcher indicate one thing, at the school level, school authorities indicated that these records reflect only the beginning of school cycle. In both schools, records of attendance were not kept up to date. In community 1, students were registered all right at the beginning of the school year but school records are only updated two months during the whole year. In community two, children were registered but the school records were not updated the whole year. The reasons provided by school authorities are that even though the Ghana Education Service has provided them with registers, they don't have any place to keep the records due to the state of the school facilities so the records are kept at the PTA chairman's house until the school building can be roofed. SMC and PTA executives interviewed indicated that they do know the school enrolment and attendance statistics. In these communities, it can still be claimed that so far, the program has succeeded in delivering educational opportunities to the communities by providing educational access to children in these communities. In terms of enrolment, attendance and retention rate, this study is inconclusive because of lack of consistent records for analysis.

Provision of learning needs: The Shepherd School program has some learning needs for children as well as facilitators. Children indicated that through this program they have acquired knowledge on personal hygiene, basic health principles, environmental protection, sanitation, numeracy and literacy. Most parents indicated that their children have been advising them the proper way to keep these animals. Children are not the only beneficiaries of the program. All the facilitators interviewed expressed the benefits they have gained through learning from each other. They have also been motivated to improve their education.

Introduction of strong relationships: Sponsors and school authorities indicated that there is a strong link between the Shepherd Schools and formal schools that are closer to the communities. The Shepherd Schools are serving as feeder schools to these formal schools. They are serving as entry points to the formal schools. Facilitators indicated that most of the time, they visit the formal schools and seek curriculum advice from teachers in the formal schools. Sponsors indicated that about 147 children have so far made their way to the formal schools. However school authorities indicated that most of these children experienced the problem of lack of vacancies in some cases or in other cases, students not able to meet the standards of the formal school. There is facilitator-facilitator and facilitator-administrator relationship: they learned from each other and provided support for each other. There is a strong school-community connection. School authorities indicated that some parents have been volunteering at the school, cooking for the children. School authorities also indicated that many parents come to the school and have chat with facilitators on ways to assist their children

improve their studies. Other parents are assisting school authorities in monitoring children's attendance.

Significant progress in community participation: Promotion of strong community involvement in school management is an objective of the program sponsors. The study reveals that the program has succeeded in involving the communities to participate in constructing and maintaining school infrastructure, monitoring facilitator punctuality, recruiting facilitator, setting cycle and timing of school. However, school authorities indicated that there is no proper definition and line of demarcation in the responsibilities between PTA and SMC. This confusion is causing a lot of management problems, because when there are issues to be discussed, these separate bodies do not know who to handle the problem. School authorities indicated that PTA and SMC meetings are supposed to be held once every term, but not many people are attending these meetings of late.

Family/Home level impact

Parental attitudinal changes: Most of the parents interviewed have developed a strong positive attitude towards their children's education (including girls education). This is buttressed by parental involvement in monitoring children's attendance. Parents are cooperating and school authorities in ensuring that children go to school. Most parents have developed a positive attitude towards girls' education. It is interesting to know that many parents interviewed indicated that "gone were the days when girls were not allowed to go to school". This cooperation according to sponsors, the results of the flexibility of the program. Children can combine both school and socio-cultural responsibilities

Knowledge transfer: This program has fostered a strong knowledge transfer. Both parents and children indicated that children are transferring the knowledge they have acquired in the school to their illiterate parents and younger siblings. One parent indicated that, "we used to have the animal kraal on our compound until my daughter pressed that the water is going to bread mosquitoes because she has leant it form school"[10].

Community level impact

Community attitudinal changes: A strong positive attitude has been developed towards children's education (including girls) in the communities. A desire for education has been created in children, parents and facilitators. The shift towards this positive attitude stems from a) Perceived benefits of education; b) Endangered and threatened lifestyle of these pastoral communities.

Introduction of democracy: From the planning to implementation stages all members in the communities have directly or indirectly participated in the decision making process of the school. Contrary to cultural practices in these communities, women and children have now been involved in decision making in this communities. About thirty percent of the members serving on the school committees are now women. Women interviewed liked the idea of women participating in the decision making of the program. One woman remarked that, "now we are given the opportunity to sit with the men in discussing issues about our own development. This was not there some few years ago"[11]. The community has been empowered to participate in some key decisions concerning their children's schooling.

[10] Interview with Irene Andema (pseudonym), September 30, 2001.
[11] Interview with Mamuna Salifu (pseudonym), July 15, 2001

Program as a catalyst: The benefits of the program are its spill over impact in the community. Respondents indicated that the program has initiated and/or facilitated community mobilization: Sponsors, chiefs and elders indicated that it is now easier to mobilize the community whenever there is any program requires the mobilization and participation of the entire community. Sponsors also indicated that the democratic process involved in the planning and implementation phases of the program has enabled the communities to open up to other outside developers. The program has initiated other learning activities: In addition to the Knowledge transfer from children to parents, and Peer tutoring at homes, sponsors indicated that through the mobilization strategy used for the Shepherd School program, they and other NGOs have been able to organize community health programs; maternal and child health programs; family planning programs; environmental protection campaigns and recently, the nationwide AIDS campaign. The study reveals that the program has kindled the spirit of voluntarism. The program has facilitated the initiation of other development activities in the communities: construction of bore hole, public places of convenience, school farms, and barns for storing grains. The program has also been an intervention program against youth migration to the southern sector of the country.

Sponsor/policy level impact

Creation of Awareness: Program has created the awareness of educational needs of the community. Sponsors and community members indicated that the communities were neglected in educational programs that suit their condition until the Action Aid came in and started this program and now at least the communities' voice has been heard at the Ministry of Education headquarters. Sponsors indicated that the fact that they have been invited at the education ministerial conferences several times to give talks about the Shepherd School program is an exhibition of the program in the policy circles. Program is also serving as a leader in non-formal basic education program. Other communities are understudying the program to implement similar programs in their communities. Sponsors indicated that the UNICEF came to understudy the factors that have led to the success of the program.

Program is a learning process for sponsors: Action Aid indicated that because this program is being piloted every aspect of it is providing learning experience. The programs were implemented as pilot programs for future replication in all northern Ghana. Sponsors are learning from the program.

A step towards government's FCUBE: Sponsors indicated that the program is the fulfillment of the FCUBE policy which states among other things that: ...The government of Ghana will adopt a radical educational delivery system by adapting instructional time schedules and school terms to suit occupational patterns and needs of economically disadvantaged groups by replicating the Shepherd School model whereby out-of-school children and youths such as street vendors, porters, children working in market places and fishing ports, children of migratory farmers and fishermen will be identified, put together and given lessons at night, using regular school facilities such as classrooms and teachers (FCUBE document, vol 1, p 40)". Program is in line with the aims of the FCUBE. It has expanded infrastructural facilities and services to enhance access for all children of school going age. It is addressing the issues of enrollment and retention for all children of school going age. It has enhanced girl-child education in the area.

CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING THE PROGRAM

Many education developers point out that in spite of its utility in providing education services for people who otherwise wouldn't have gained this opportunity, non-formal education programs are beleaguered with so many constraints and problems. Respondents identified what they saw as factors that put constraints on the program. These factors have been put under four broad categories; school factors; family/home factors; community factors; and sponsor/policy factors.

School factors: Respondents identified seven problem areas in the program. These factors are a) inadequacy of material inputs, which include facilities and logistics; b) Facilitator recruitment and retention; d) the limited scope of the curriculum; e) instructional period; f) patterns of children's disengagement; g) lack of proper monitoring and supervision; h) mainstreaming of learners in formal school. School authorities and students pointed the lack of logistics as the most single constraint militating against the program. Facilitators and administrators pointed out that, lack of record keeping and continuous assessment is a serious setback for children who would like to continue to the formal school.

Family/Home level: Respondents identified four factors relating to the family/home, which directly or indirectly put some constraints on the program. These factors are; a) inadequate learning support at the home; b) lack of some parental understanding; c) parental/children dissatisfaction with the language of instruction; d) socio-economic status of parents.

Community level: Respondents identified three communal factors that are putting constraints on the program. These factors are; a) Diminished and withdrawn community participation; b) Socio-economic status of community; c) Appropriate time to secure community participation.

Sponsor/policy factors: Respondents identified four sponsor/policy factors that are putting constraints on the program. These factors are; a) Dysfunctional supervision and monitoring; b) skepticism of key partners; c) resistance to innovation at the policy level; d) bureaucracy

FACTORS AFFECTING SUSTAINABILITY AND REPLICATION OF PROGRAM

Respondents indicated three key factors that have the potential to determine the sustainability and replication of the program. However, respondents indicated that the single most important factor determining the sustainability and replication is the attitudes of GES towards the program. Once GES embraces and integrates the program in the educational system, all other factors become secondly.

Attitudes of key partners towards the program: Respondents had different views on sustainability and replication. Respondents indicated that the attitudes of all key partners towards the program as the days go are very crucial for program sustainability. The attitudes of the community members are very crucial in the level of their participation and involvement in school management. The attitudes of sponsors towards the program are very vital for the financial support of the program. The attitudes of GES towards the program play a vital role in integrating the program in the formal school system.

Level of community participation: Since one objective of the program is to enlist strong community participation in the program, the level of community participation also shows the level of their commitment in terms of time and resources in implementing and managing the school. It also determines the extent to which parents would be willing to allow children to enroll and attend the school. A diminished and withdrawal of community participation as is currently seen has a serious implication for the continuity of the program.

Facilitator/Teacher recruitment and retention: Respondents indicated that facilitator recruitment and retention is an issue in sustaining the program. Sponsors and community members indicated that it is very difficult to get community members who have certain level of education to be able to assist in the schools. In one community, members indicated that they had to go to another community to recruit two facilitators. Retaining the facilitators is even more problematic. About 97 percent of the facilitators are SSS leavers who are re-sitting the WAEC exams in order to enroll in the training colleges. All facilitators indicated that they have the plans to further their education. Facilitators indicated that they are not receiving any motivation. Their salary of 12.00 CAD is not enough to support them and as it is now, they have abandoned their farming activities that gave them some money. The community also promised to support them but have not fulfilled this promises. Sponsors indicated that they and GES have jointly put up a program to facilitate recruitment and retention of facilitators.

KEY FACTORS AFFECTING MAINSTREAMING OF CHILDREN

Respondents identified six constraining factors in mainstreaming children in formal schools. These factors are:

The scope of the curriculum: Sponsors indicated that so far the curriculum being used is the GES curriculum that has been translated into Kusaal language. Unfortunately, the three-hour period is not so suitable for facilitators to finish the contents of the curriculum;

Language of instruction: Studies reveal that children benefit when they are taught in the language they are fluent in at the early stages. Parents and children indicated that they are happy for learning in English, but at the same time they will prefer to be taught in English because it is the only avenue to communicate with the outside world;

Pedagogical strategy: This program uses more child-centered pedagogical strategies as against the frontal teachings happening in the school. ;

Adjustment to the formal school: Most parents and children indicated that adjusting the formal school with all its rigidity and laws, and the expenses involved will be problematic. Children indicated that strapping will be a problem for them because in the Shepherd Schools, they are not strapped;

Logistics for children's transfer.

Conclusion

In this study, my intention was to explore the impact of a non-formal primary education program on sedentary pastoral communities in northern Ghana. In general this study confirms that the program has been successful in providing educational access to children in the communities.

In regards to the impact of the program on children's enrolment and attendance, the study is highly inconclusive. This is because school records are inadequate and records from sponsors provide inaccuracies with that of school authorities. However, the fact that on a

head count, so many children can be found at the school in these communities can justify the impact of the program on children's engagement. Sponsors interviewed indicated that, "the fact that during the three years, more than 700 children who would not have entered school, have been receiving basic education is a success. The program has improved access in rural communities, and appears to be girl-child friendly"[12]. Through interviews with key stakeholders it became apparent that the presence of the school program in the community alone could not have fostered children's engagement. There are a) school factors such as accessibility, school safety, school providing temporary needs, non-coerciveness of school, parental and school authorities' supervision, and state of the school facilities; b) personal factors; such as motivation by friends, personal ambitions, trust; c) home/family factors such as parental attitudes, parental supervision, trust, parental expectations, perceived cost-effectiveness of the program, and level of parental understanding, that contributed to children's engagement in the program. This study reveals that these pertinent factors, which may be peculiar to these communities determined children's engagement in school. This revelation necessitates that in planning programs like this, education developers need to structure the program to suit the context and the "world" of the learners and other beneficiaries.

Community participation in this program follows what Evans (1981) calls the "consultative level" where decision makers seek advice and suggestions from those involved and beneficiaries but the extend to which resulting inputs are used is the sole prerogative of the decision-maker[13]. From the planning to the implementation stages there were series of consultations with the community but the final prerogatives resided with the sponsors. Community members indicated that the sponsors had the plan of implementing the program in mind (this was confirmed by sponsors) and enlisted the communities to get involve as partners since they are the beneficiaries. Through this process, the sponsors also informed the communities, their (communities) responsibilities. True democracy seemed to be lacking in the implementation process.

Sponsors bypassed key bodies like the GES and District Assembly who had the potential to play a leading role in the sustainability and integration of the program. For instance given the need for the co-option of other bodies like GES and the District Assembly in the later stages, implementation of the program was very dysfunctional. It was after the program had been fully implemented that the sponsors decided to sell the "idea" to GES. The fact that the stance of the GES on the program has been skeptical and that of dilly-dallying shows the unharmonious relationship that has existed between the sponsors and the policy level from the planning to the implementation stages.

This study reveals that type of community participation in school management in this project is only limited to infrastructural supervision. Monitoring and supervision of learning processes is totally absent. In order to structure effective monitoring sponsors need to incorporate proper monitoring and supervisory mechanisms that would provide learning environment on one hand, and facilitate learning among clientele. The whole idea of the program is not about infrastructure. It is about enhancing learning. A situation where management is equated with maintenance of physical facilities to the neglect of what goes on in the classroom amount to not much. School facilitators bemoaned the lack of proper monitoring and supervision in the school. These are community members who have been recruited and given only two weeks training and given the task of teaching. As an example one facilitator indicated that, "since I have been teaching in this school for the past five

[12] Interview with Joe Fritz (pseudonym). November 16, 2001.
[13] Evans, D. R. (1983). Participation in non-formal education at the local level: Ghana and Indonesia. In Bock, J. C., & Papagiannis, G. J. (Eds.). Non-formal education and national development. New York: Praeger Publishers.

years, nobody has come to observe how I teach, whether it is the good methodology or not, I am made to face it alone. No body comes to observe my teaching in the classroom so that any feedback could be given to me. As to whether or not I am doing the teaching wrongly or rightly, I don't know"[14].

Now, I turn to assess whether the objectives of the Shepherd School program are being achieved. With regards to the objective of providing basic functional education to at least 30 percent of children living in target communities who do not have or have not had access to formal schooling or to those who have dropped out of school, the study has revealed that the program is fostering children's engagement in school in the communities.

As regards the second objective of serving as entry point for learners to the formal schools, the study reveals that the program is in that line. However, respondents indicated that, a number of school and home factors put constraints on mainstreaming children in the formal school.

On the third objective to provide children who will return to the community after Shepherd School with basic literacy and numeracy skills, the dream is yet to realize. However, children interviewed indicated the utility of advancing in the social ladder rather than returning to the community.

[14]Interview with Joseph Adongo (Pseudonym). November 20, 2001

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